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Idea of Justice in Christian Perspective (Book Review)

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but they say nothing about accompaniments.) Calvin's statements regarding music in general and performance practice in particular are recorded in various sources, but of special importance is his "Epistre au lecteur" in *La forme des prières et chants ecclésiastiques* of 1542, not the *Institutes*. Fortunately, even in Calvin's own day, not everyone held the same convictions against accompanied or polyphonic hymn or Psalm settings, and there exist large collections of these which were, in Calvinistic circles, designated for home and devotional use, a practice which could well be reinstated today, although not to the exclusion of worship service music.

However, since the purpose of the anthology is to present the piety of Calvin, it would seem appropriate that his position with respect to music be more adequately presented, even though his regulations are no longer widely accepted. Consideration of his views today justifiably results in attributing guilt to Calvin for, in effect, propagating the isolation of "sacred" music from music in general, and subsequently for secularizing musical aesthetics, the effects of which much of the Christian community still feels acutely. * In an era when Christians are attempting

to claim all areas of life for Kingdom use, it is embarrassing to try to reclaim something rejected by the eminent leader of Calvinist Reformed faith. It is easier to ignore his disavowal, but doing so does not present a thorough perspective.

These musical settings of Calvin's versified Psalms should be acquired by church choir directors and Christian music educators interested in tradition, good texts, and good music which is not too difficult. They are suitable for both children's and adult choirs, separately or combined. The choirs could teach the melodies to congregations, but permission is required to reproduce the text, presumably even for this purpose. This collection should do more than revive some very beautiful old tunes and texts. It should focus attention on the richness of Psalm texts, and both encourage and challenge other Christian musicians to use modern translations and paraphrases as well, and to set them in an accessible, artistic, modern musical language.

* Victor Gebaurer, "Theology of Church Music, Reformers," in *Key Words in Church Music*, Carl Schalk, ed. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1978, pp. 339-340.



The Idea of Justice in Christian Perspective, by Jan Dengerink. Toronto: Wedge Publishing Foundation, 1978. \$2.95 pb. Reviewed by James W. Skillen, Associate Professor of Political Science.

Jan Dengerink is known to many Christians in the U.S. and Canada. A Dutch professor who is presently active on several fronts with the Association for Calvinistic Philosophy headquartered in his country, Dengerink has lectured at Calvin, Dordt, Trinity Christian, Gordon and other Christian colleges in North America. He spoke at the Second International Christian Political Conference held at Dordt in 1978, and he has been active in the International Association for Reformed Faith and Action and in the work of the *International Reformed Bulletin*. He completed his doctoral work at the Free University of Amsterdam and served in the administration of that university for many years.

If one is familiar with the history of philosophy or the history of political and legal thought, and if

one is also acquainted with the Christian legal philosophy of Herman Dooyeweerd, then this little book will be a fruitful challenge. Dengerink presupposes a great deal on the part of the reader as he briefly surveys the history of the idea of justice in the West from the ancient Greeks to the twentieth century.

But even for advanced students the book may prove to be difficult because of its compact style and its lack of contextual explanation and elaboration. Dengerink deals very abstractly with legal and philosophical concepts, giving little if any historical or political information about the authors that he discusses or about the time periods that he covers.

Moreover, the author actually deals only quite generally with the idea of justice and with his

Christian perspective. A great many philosophical problems are uncovered, but it is not always clear how the idea of justice is related to ideas of law, freedom, authority, and many more. Dengerink moves toward a Christian assessment and perspective in the final pages of the book, but he is even more general at that point with little elaboration of a normative Christian view of justice.

The conclusion to which this reviewer comes is that Dengerink's essay will be appreciated most fully if used as a supplement in a college course or if read in conjunction with Herman Dooyeweerd's *The Christian Idea of the State* (Craig) and L. Kalsbeek's *Contours of a Christian Philosophy: An Introduction to Herman Dooyeweerd's Thought* (Wedge).



A Christian Labour's Wasteland, edited by Edward Vanderkloet. Toronto: Wedge Publishing Foundation, 1978. \$4.95 pb. Reviewed by James W. Skillen, Associate Professor of Political Science.

For those who are acquainted with the Christian Labour Association of Canada, this book will be an encouraging reminder that after twenty-five years the CLAC is refusing to sit down quietly in the middle of a troubled Canadian economy to count up its wage increases or to meditate gleefully on a powerful strike record. To those who know nothing of an organized Christian labor union in North America, this is just the introduction they need.

Ed Vanderkloet, the Executive Secretary of the CLAC, has brought together several of the best articles and speeches of recent years that have appeared in the organization's monthly magazine, *THE GUIDE*, or that were presented at its annual conventions. The essays confess and explain the faith of the CLAC — a Christian faith that is "labor intensive" and which is strikingly unusual in the secularized world of big unions.

Bernard Zylstra's essay explains the meaning of each word in the CLAC's name. Harry Antonides argues that a Christian labor organization is a real alternative for today, not an outdated mistake left over from an earlier age. Al Wolters discusses the importance of ideas in the history of modern, hard-nosed, down-to-earth economics, and urges Christians not to collapse beneath pragmatic criticisms but to get to work developing a Christian view of labor. H. Evan Runner explains why the little CLAC is a giant threat to our modern "tolerant" societies because it exposes the religiously deep intolerance of secularized labor unions and labor laws which do not have room for a Christian union. Calvin Seerveld takes the Biblical image of the rainbow to point out to the CLAC that God's blessing will lead it into the

future if it is willing to keep on repenting and reforming and not give up its true calling.

The two essays that deal most concretely with labor and economic life are Vanderkloet's and Bob Goudzwaard's. Vanderkloet argues that Christians must oppose the common faith held by liberals, conservatives, and Marxists alike, namely, that the proper goal of human life is material prosperity through ever increasing economic growth. Christians should be working instead for a creationally responsible, God-honoring, neighbor-loving pattern of stewardship that leads to true peace and health. Among other things this will mean the restructuring of economic enterprises so that laborers can assume genuine human responsibility as partners in the workplace. It will mean less production of wasteful products, more care for the environment, and greater utilization of all human skills.

Goudzwaard explains in some detail the meaning of the biblical idea of stewardship which throws a whole new light on ownership, work, and leisure time. The reason why a Christian labor union is so important in all of this is that only in community can Christians bear testimony to the unique style of work to which God calls His creatures. Work, according to Goudzwaard, should manifest creativity, not mechanical repetitiveness, cooperation, not lonely isolation, and true well-being and satisfaction, not meaningless monotony that brings only a pay check.

Whatever the nature of your work, you will be strengthened and encouraged as a Christian by reading these essays.